

# The Ghost Lovers

The war came when no-one thought it even remotely possible.

Everyone, whether king or coal miner, queen or washerwoman, omnibus driver or weapons manufacturer assumed that the only possible wars were spatial ones.

Temporal war was on no-one's mind. Until it happened and then everyone was in it.

IN IT!

In the thick of it and the bloody fact of the war was glorious or sexy or thrilling and we were all on board with the thrill of it. To fight the anarchists and save civilisation was the cry and the banner and the joy of all.

Four or five years later or earlier it was a different story. Then it was dirty and bloody and sick and dreadful. As time moved on, forward or backward, in a strange foxtrot tango waltz time.

Rubbish lay uncollected in the streets and bodies entwined in passionate doorways. Not long after or before the bodies lay uncollected in the streets and the rubbish was being searched by former viscounts for scraps of edible bread.

The women had told the men to go and fight and the women gave white feathers to the ones who remained. Then the women themselves went to fight and were out there at the time warped front and then and now nobody cared who was fighting whom and what it was all about. Women had proven their power and their superiority over men and men had proven their power over each other and death walked through the lands of the Planet Earth swiping left and swiping right with a scythe of nanofibre and tore molecule from molecule and heartbeat from heartbeat.

New forms of explosive were deployed by all sides in the conflict bursting in the moments between thought and action and tearing ideas from feeling and feelings from flesh.

The ghost lovers were transparently seen in times after and in times before.

The men with the girls and the women with their boys and all the permutations of boys with boys and women with women wrestled both mentally and physically with each other's souls knowing that civilisation was entering the void state, the nothingness of being mere illusion and hope.

They were dream figures of each other's imagined lust and love and hatred and anger twisted through the temporal shifts of orgasm and epiphany, or of failure and masturbation. They rose and fell in the glory of destruction and talked of the creation of a new world from the ashes. A new world which they would build either before or after the old one had been reduced to ruins and wasted heat.

A corporal lay half corporeal in the mud and shed his physical body and rose up above the battlefield to fly through the dreamland of star material flecked with whisky and spite and

dread. His rifle lay far below him, a marker of wood and metal, organic material and inorganic, shining blue.

Students constructed models of four-dimensional sexual unions and designed new architecture which would incorporate the forms of the broken continuum into the structure of the new subterranean world. Troglydites they would become or would have been in the future or in the past of the ruined world. Wearing helmets with lamps they would dig and delve in the bottom of the pit. Social workers seeking gems in the gemeinschaft of the new age. Miners of the crystal clarity of negation.

"The Ghost Lovers" they were named and everyone saw them. In doorways and alleyways and vacant rooms and forest pathways. They were shop window dummies and statues and holograms and two dimensional posters which moved and shadows and smoke and mirrors and not nothing but not something but everywhere everywhere everywhere. The fictional construct of Michael Kristen took on the aspect of the hero archetype, climbed over barbed wire, disentangled itself and ran screaming a battle cry toward the enemy. The dead and alive versions of Kristen looked on in wonderment and disbelief.

In a sense nothing was happening but it was taking a bloody long time about it and a lot of people were dying. The nothing that was happening certainly meant something and the somethings that it meant to so many people were bloody horrible somethings. The fifth and sixth horsemen of pain and filth rode the wasteland like rangers employed by the King of Nightmare.

Needle missiles imploded against void bombs and supernova splitters cracked the interstitial levels of nine reality systems. A continuum of tea cups and lovely chatter shared a conceptual space with a steam driven airship filled with terrified animals. Some Spielberg seemalike director sat outside of time recording the moving images.

The division between fact and fiction was cracked. A group of Germans and Belgians were attempting to rescue a rocking horse from a sucking bog. The voice of LOVE was struggling to be heard.

The outlaw Joycie James and his partner Billy the Kidder were under fire from the Gatling guns of the chevrons of the noir. Everyone was dancing to the Kali Yuga Boogie. There's nothing wrong and nothing right and nothing borrowed, nothing blue, nothing old and nothing new. All time goes around the mechanical sun dial of electromagnetic radiation. At sunrise we see the sun of eight minutes ago climbing into the chariot of Helios for the day's journey across the hemisphere.

In all times before and after the war we are seen as ghosts of the conflict wandering the corridors of the many mansions wherein the chaos dwells.

The enemy, if they existed at all, were designated as "The Anarchists". They rejected all forms of hierarchical structure including that of history. They had killed the Arch Duke. They had blown up Parliament. They wore masks which revealed their true nature by hiding their faces.

All of the rooms in the entire world are haunted by headless kings.

Nuns and clowns stare malevolently from every crevice of every building.

We chatted in a very civilised way. My friend and his girlfriend with their large print of Blue Nude by Matisse. We chatted and looked up at the Blue Nude. We admired the simple and yet perfect form Matisse had miraculously created. When my friend stood up and walked to the kitchen to put the kettle on his girlfriend stood up too and I stood up because it seemed the polite thing to do. My friend walked through the door to the kitchen and the kitchen door swung closed after him.

The very instant. I mean THE VERY INSTANT that the door had swung closed and we were in a different room from the kitchen where my friend was putting on the kettle my friend's girlfriend took a sudden and obvious step toward me. She instantly positioned herself too close and too obvious in the large room with the high ceiling and the the Blue Nude by Matisse. Recognising immediately that her body language was an attempt at "starting something" I took two steps backward. I was shocked by her blatant desire to cause hurt to my friend by trying to start something literally behind my friend's back.

It wasn't the first time that something similar had occurred. My friend tended to have girlfriends who were always looking to betray him with someone like me and I was always shocked and appalled.

My friend came back into the room. He set out the tea things.

We all had a cup of tea and then I politely bid my friend farewell and resolved to avoid his treacherous girlfriend in future.

That's what I distinctly remember from the moments before or after the beginning or end of the time conflict. I left my friend's apartment and walked along the south London street toward the railway station. Then suddenly the world went to hell.

The Anarchists hit us with reality-destroying time missiles from wherever and whenever their base was located. It occurred to me that I might get trapped in that horrible awkward tea sipping moment after the horrible awkward moment next to the kitchen door swinging closed. I panicked and ran to the station!

Instead I became trapped with one foot on the platform and one foot on the train.

Then it was the moment of my birth and then the moment of my death. Then there was a blue tube and then Exeter Cathedral. It became a bit kaleidoscopic after that.

I found it rather difficult to be critical. The rational thought process of my brain was in rapid flux.

I wandered through the south wall of a little corner shop in Windsor. People ran screaming away in terror at the apparition I now was.

Life's like that these days isn't it?

